

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8 are amended. The features added to independent claims 1, 3, 5 and 8 are fully supported by Fig. 1, for example. No new matter is added.

The Office Action, on page 2, objects to the specification because of informalities. In response, the specification has been amended to obviate the informalities. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claims 1, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for being allegedly indefinite. In response, claims 1, 3 and 5 are amended to recite "manufactured from the mask blank." Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,226,705 to Hata or U.S. Patent No. 7,238,454 to Kobayashi et al. (Kobayashi). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended independent claim 1 recites, and independent claim 8 similarly recites, "wherein the resist film is not formed in the supported region of the mask blank."

Hata discloses a resist film that remains on a support area and its peripheral area and/or adjacent area and is removed from any other areas of the circumferential portion. (See Hata's col. 4, lines 15-28; col. 16, lines 25-47 and Fig. 12). For example, Hata discloses the resist film is removed so that it is left on the support area. (See Hata's col. 4, lines 16-18).

The Office Action, on page 4, points to Hata's claims 2-20 to allegedly show the above-mentioned features of the independent claims. However, Hata's claims 2-20 fail to disclose or suggest all the features recited the independent claims. For example, Hata's claim 2 simply states that "the resist film is absent from peripheral areas of the circumferential portion," and does not disclose or suggest the resist film is not formed in a supported region. Hata's other claims also fail to disclose or suggest these features.

Kobayashi also fails to disclose or suggest all of the features of amended independent claims 1 and 8. In Kobayashi, the resist film 4 is formed along the entire surface of the substrate 5. (See Kobayashi's col. 9, lines 33-34 and Fig. 13). Because Kobayashi forms a resist film 4 on the entire surface of the substrate 5, Kobayashi fails to disclose or suggest a resist film not formed in the supported region of the mask blank.

Therefore, Kobayashi and Hata fails to disclose or suggest all the features of amended independent claims 1 and 8.

Amended independent claims 3 and 5 recite, "wherein the resist film in the supported region of the mask blank is not exposed to light, so as to remove the resist film when the resist film is developed."

Hata discloses a method for removing film so that it is left on the support area and its peripheral area and/or adjacent area. (See Hata's col. 4, lines 17-19).

Kobayashi discloses in Kobayashi's claim 1, "said removing step is carried out by exposing only the resist film in said portion of the edge of said substrate ... thereafter by selectively supplying said developer to only said exposed area." Kobayashi therefore discloses removing resist in an exposed area rather than removing resist film when the resist film is developed in the support region of the mask blank that is not exposed to light.

Therefore, Hata and Kobayashi fail to disclose or suggest all of the features in amended independent claims 3 and 5.

It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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